

THE PIPES OF PAN.

THE PIPES OF PAN
FROM THE BOOK OF
MYTHS

BY BLISS CARMAN

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“LOW TIDE ON GRAND PRE”
“BALLADS OF LOST HAVEN,” ETC.
“BEHIND THE ARRAS,”
“BY THE AURELIAN WALL,”
“A WINTER HOLIDAY,”
“CHRISTMAS EVE AT ST. YAVIN’S,”
“ODE FOR THE CORONATION OF KING EDWARD,”
JOINT AUTHOR WITH RICHARD HOVEY OF
“SONGS FROM VAGABONDIA,”
“MORE SONGS FROM VAGABONDIA,”
AND “LAST SONGS FROM VAGABONDIA.”

TO
C. G. D. R.

"For my heart had a touch of the woodland tree."

*The Ghost House,
Twilight Park in the Catskills,
August, 1902.*

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PREFACE

It is a hearty old saying that "Good wine needs no bush." Why, then, should the master of a roadhouse hang out a sign, letting folk know there is good drink within?

Consider the feelings of the landlord, poor man. At once nettled and abashed, he exclaims:

"Pray why should I stick a bough over my door? My tavern is well bespoke for miles about, and all the folk know I serve nothing but good, honest liquor,—and mighty comforting it is of a cold night, when the fire is bright on the hearth, 'coo refreshing on a hot day either."

"Nay, but," says the stranger, "how should a traveller know of this? You must advertise, man. Hang out your sign to attract the passer-

by, and increase trade. Trade's the thing. You should be doing a driving business, with a cellar like yours."

"Huh," replies the taverner, "I perceive that in the city where you come from it may not be a mark of character in a man to rely wholly upon merit, but that if one would ensure success, he must sound a trumpet before him, as the hypocrites do, that they may have glory of men, as the Word says."

"Tut, man," says the stranger, "look at your friend John Doe under the hill yonder. Does a wonderful business. Famous all over the country for his home-brewed ale, and his pockets lined with gold."

"Yes," says the host, "John Doe is a good thrifty man and as fine a comrade as you'd wish to find, selling his hundred thousand bottles a year. But the gist of the matter between us isn't all in quantity, I'll be bound. Quality is something. And as for myself I would as soon have a bottle of wine as a keg of beer any day. Wine is the poetry of life,

a man needs have,—meat for his belly, a fire for his shins, and generous wine to keep him in countenance with himself. And that's no such easy matter in a difficult world, I can tell you. "It is wine that gives a man courage and romance, and puts heart in him for deeds and adventures and all manner of plain wholesome love. And that, after all, is the mainspring with most men, hide it how they may. For what ever was done, that was worth doing, and was not done, for a woman or for the sake of a friend, I should like to know?"

"Maybe I hadn't thought of that," says the stranger. "You must have tasted some rare wine in your time."

"Not so much," says the other, "but I was born with a shrewd taste for it, you may say. Moreover I came of a people who were far farers in their day, and have been abroad myself more than once. So it comes you

find the foreign vintages in my bins. There's some Greek wine I have, sir, that's more than a century old, I'll wager; and a rare Moonwine, as they call it, picked up in an out-of-the-way port, that will make you forget your sorrow like a strain of music; light wines from France, too; and some Heather Brose, very old and magical, such as the little dark people used to make hereabout in the times of the Celts long ago,—and very good times they were too. It is not these days that have all the wisdom ever was, you may be sure."

"You are not such a bad advocate, after all," remarks the stranger. "You speak very invitingly."

"Step inside," says the landlord.

BLISS CARMAN.

October 10, 1902.

OVERLORD

πνεῦμα κυρίου ἐπ' ἐμέ.

LORD of the grass and hill,
Lord of the rain,
White Overlord of will,
Master of pain,

I who am dust and air
Blown through the halls of death,
Like a pale ghost of prayer —
I am thy breath.

Lord of the blade and leaf,
Lord of the bloom,
Sheer Overlord of grief,
Master of doom,

Lonely as wind or snow,
Through the vague world and dim,
Vagrant and glad I go;
I am thy whim.

Lord of the storm and lull,
Lord of the sea,
I am thy broken gull,
Blown far alee.

Lord of the harvest dew,
Lord of the dawn,
Star of the paling blue
Darkling and gone,

Lost on the mountain height
Where the first winds are stirred,
Out of the wells of night
I am thy word.

Lord of the haunted hush,
Where raptures throng
I am thy hermit thrush,
Ending no song.

Lord of the frost and cold,
Lord of the North,
When the red sun grows old
And day goes forth,

I shall put off this girth,—
Go glad and free,
Earth to my mother earth,
Spirit to thee.

THE PIPES OF PAN

*THIS is something that I hear,
Half a cry and half a word,—
On a magic day in June,
In the ghostly azure noon,
Where the wind among the trees
Made mysterious melodies,
Such as those which filled the earth
When the elder gods had birth.*

Ah, the world is growing old !
Of the joys it used to hold,
Love and beauty naught have I
But the fragrant memory,

Once, ah, once, (ye know the story !)
When the earth was in her glory,

Ere man gave his heart to breed
Iron hate and heartless greed,
Near a meadow by a stream
Quiet as an ageless dream,
As I watched from the green rim
Of a beech grove cool and dim,
Musing in the pleasant shade
The soft leafy sunlight made,
What should gleam and move and quiver
Down by the clear, pebbly river,
Where the tallest reeds were growing
And the bluest iris blowing,—
Gleam a moment and then pass,
(Ah, the dare-to-love she was,
In her summer-fervid dress
Of sheer love and loveliness!)
Wayward, melting, shy, and fond,
Lissome as a bulrush wand,
Fresh as meadowsweet new-blown,
Sandal lost, and loosened zone,

Our own white Arcadian
Touched with rose and creamy tan,
Eyes the colour that might fleck
The red meadow lily's neck,
Hair with the soft silky curl,
Of some strayed patrician girl,
Beech-brown on the sunlit throat,
Cheek of tawny apricot,
Parted lips and breast aglow,—
Who but Syrinx, as ye know!

Gone, swift as a darting swallow,
What could young Pan do but follow?
(Have ye felt the warm blood leap,
When the soul awakes from sleep,
At a glance from some dark eye
Of a sudden passing by?—
Known the pulse's hurried throb
And the breathing's catch and sob,

When upon his race with Death,
Life the runner halts for breath,
Taking with a happy cry
His brief draught of ecstasy)
Call I did, with only laughter
Blown back, as I hurried after;
Till I reached the riverside,
Where I last had seen her glide
In among the reeds, and there
Lost her. But a breath of air
Moved the grass-heads, going by,
And I heard the rushes sigh.

So the chase has always proved;
And Pan never yet has loved,
But the loved one all too soon
Merged in music and was gone,—
Melted like a passing strain,
Vanished like a gust of rain

Or a footfall of the wind,
Leaving not a trace behind.
All that once was Pitys stirs
In the soft voice of the firs.
Lovers, when ye hear that sigh,
Not without a prayer pass by!
And, O lovers, when ye hear,
On a morning soft and clear,
All that once was Echo still
Wandering from hill to hill,
Breathe a prayer lest ye too stray,
Lost upon the mountain way,
And go seeking all your lives
Love, when but his ghost survives!

Then a swaying river reed,
From the water, for my need,
In a dream I blindly drew,
Cut and fashioned, ranged and blew,-

Such a music as was played
Never yet since earth was made.
Shrilling, wild and dazed and thin,
All my welling heart therein
Trembled, till the piping grew
Pure as fire and fine as dew,
Till confusion was untangled
From the crowding notes that jangled,
And a new-created world
To my wonder was unfurled,
Sphere by sphere, as climbing sense
Faltered at the imminence
Of the fragile thing called soul
Just beyond oblivion's goal,
And creation's open door
Bade me enter and explore.

Slowly hill and stream and wood
Merged and melted, for my mood,

With the colour of the sun
In the pipe I played upon.
Slowly anger from me fell,
In the coil of that new spell
My own music laid on me,—
Like the great rote of the sea,
Like the whisper of the stream,
Like a wood-bird's sudden gleam,
Or the gusts that swoop and pass
Through the ripe and seeding grass
Perfect rhythm and colour cast
In the perfect mould at last.

Slowly I came back to poise,—
A new self with other joys,
Other raptures than before,
Harming less and helping more.
I could strive no more for gain;
Being was my true domain,

And the smiling peace that ever
In the end outruns endeavour.
It was not enough to do,
I must feel, but reason too,—
Find the perfect form and fashion
For the elemental passion;
Else must blemish still be hurled
On the beauty of the world,—
Gloom and clang and hate alloy
Colour, melody, and joy,
And the violence of error
Fill the earth with sound and terror.

So I felt the subtle change,
Large, enduring, keen, and strange;
And on that day long ago
I became the god ye know,
Made by music out of man.
Now ye have the pipes of Pan,

Which ye call by Syrinx' name,
Keeping bright a little fame,
Few folk ever think upon.
Ah, but where is Syrinx gone?

*As the mountain twilight stow
Through the woods from bole to bole,
A dumb wanderer setting free
Every shy divinity,
I became aware of each
Presence, aspen, bass, and beech;
And they all found voice and made
A green music in the shade.*

Therefore, therefore, mortal man,
When ye hear the pipes of Pan,
Marvel not that they should hold
Something sad and calm and old,
Like an eerie minor strain
Running through the strong refrain

All there is of human woe
Pan has fathomed long ago ;
All of sorrow, all of ill,
Kindly Pan remembers still ;
Disappointment, grief, disdain,
Stifled impulse and bleak pain,—
Pan has learned them ; Pan has known
Hurts and passions of his own.

Thus Pan knows the secret hid
Under the Great Pyramid ;
Why young lovers for their love
Think the stars are light enough,
And they very well may house
In the odorous fir boughs,—
Think there is no light of day
With the loved one gone away,
Use in life, nor pleasure more
By the hearth or out of door,—

Since all things begin and end
But to glad the little friend,
And all gladness is forgot
Where the little friend is not.

Thus Pan melts your human heart
With the magic of his art.
Yet, O heart-distracted man,
When you hear the pipes of Pan,
Marvel not that they should hold
Something sure and strong and bold,
Like a dominant refrain
Heartening the minor strain.

Come into the woods once more;
Leave the fire and close the door;
Trust the spirit that has made
Musical the light and shade,
Still to guard you, still to guide you,
Somewhere in the wood beside you.

Pace for pace upon the road
To your larger next abode.
Though the world should lay a finger
On your arm to bid you linger
Ye shall neither halt nor tarry
(Little be the load ye carry !).
When ye hear the pipes of Pan
Shrill and pleading in the van.
'Tis the music that has freed you
From the old life, and shall lead you,
Gently wise and strongly fond,
To the greater life beyond.
Yet I whisper to you, "Stay ;
That new life is here ; to-day
In your home, whose roof shall rise
From the ground before your eyes."

For Pan loves you and is near.
Though no music you should hear.

Hearken, hearken ; it will grow,
Spite of bitterness and woe,
Clear and sweet and undistraught,
(This old earth's impassioned thought,)
'And the sorry heart shall learn
What no rapture could discern.
All the music ye have heard :
Mountain brook and orchard bird ;
Fifers in the April swamp,
Fiddlers leading August's pomp ;
All the mellow flutes of June
Melting on the mating tune ;
Pale tree cricket with his bell
Ringing ceaselessly and well,
Sounding silver to the brass
Of his cousin in the grass ;
Hot cicada clacking by,
When the air is dusty dry ;
Old man owl, with noiseless flight,
Whoo-hoo-hooing in the night ;

Surf of ocean, sough of pine ;
Note of warbler, sharp and fine ;
Rising wind and falling rain,
Lowling cattle on the plain ;
And that hardly noticed sound
When the apples come to ground,
On the long, still afternoons,
In the shelter of the dunes ;
Chir and guggle, bark and cry,
Bleat, hum, twitter, coo and sigh,
Mew and belling, hoot and bay,
Clack and chirrup, croak and neigh,
Whoof and cackle, whine and creak,
Honk and chatter, caw and squeak ;
Wolf and eagle, mink and moose,
Each for his own joyous use
Uttering the heart's desire
As the season bade aspire ;
Folk of meadow, crag, and dale,
Open barren and deep swale,—

Every diverse rhythm and time
Brought to order, ranged in rhyme :
All these bubbling notes once ran
Thrilling through the pipes of Pan.

Think you Pan forgets the
Learned beneath the slim new moon,
When these throbbings all were blent
To the dominant intent ?

All the beauties ye have seen :
Autumn scarlet, young spring green ;
Floating mists that drift and follow
Up the dark blue mountain hollow ;
Yellow sunlight, silver spray ;
The wild creatures at their play ;
Through still hours the floating seed
Of the thistle and milkweed,
And the purple asters snowed
In a drift beside the road ;

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Swarthy fern by pebbly shoal ;
Mossed and mottled beech-tree bole ;
Fireflies in a dewy net,
When the summer eves are wet ;
All the bright, gay-coloured things
Boyed in air on balanced wings ;
All earth's wonder ; then the sea
In his lone immensity
Only the great stars can share,
And the life uncoun ted there
Where the coral gardens lie
And the painted droves go by,
In the water-light and gloom,
Silent till the day of doom :
These have lent, as beauty can,
Colour to the pipes of Pan.

Think you Pan forgets the keys
Of their primal melody,

Phrase and motive to revive
Every drooping soul alive?

'All the wilding rapture shared
With the loved one, when ye dared
(Lip to lip and knee to knee)
Force the door of destiny,—
Greatly loved and greatly gave,
Too divine to stint or save;
All the passion ye have poured
For the joy of the adored,
Spending without thought or measure
Young delight and priceless treasure,
Grown immortal in the hour
When fresh manhood came in flower;
All the ecstasy unpent
From sweet ardours finding vent
In the coming on of spring,
When the rainy uplands ring,

And the misty woods unfold
To the magic as of old;
All the hot, delicious swoon
Of the teeming summer noon,
When the year is brought to prime
By the bees among the thyme,
And each mortal heart made over
By the wind among the clover:
All these glad things ye shall find
With a free and single mind,
Dreaming eye and cheek of tan,
Lurking in the pipes of Pan.

*So the forest wind went by,—
Half a word and half a sigh,—
On a magic night in June,
When the wondrous silent moon
Flooded the blue mountain clove,
And the stream in any beech grove*

*Uttered secrets strange and deep.
Like one talking in his sleep.*

Would ye enter, maid and man,
The novitiate of Pan?
Know the secret of the strain
Lures you, through the summer plain,
Guess the meaning of the thrill
Haunts you on the autumn hill?
Would ye too contrive a measure
Out of love, to fill your leisure?
Learn to fashion a flute-reed
That should answer to love's need,
When the spirit in you cries
To be given form and guise
Others may perceive and love,
Fair and much accounted of,—
Craves to be the tenant heart
In some wild, new, lovely art,

Such as haunts the glades of spring
When the woodlands bloom and ring?

While the silver night still broods
On the mountain solitudes,
And the great white planet still
Is undimmed upon the hill,—
Ere a hint of subtile change
Steals across the purple range
To arouse the sleeping bird,—
Hear the wise old master's word,
When he leads the pregnant notes
From the reedy golden throats,
And the traveller, in their spell,
Halts, and wonders what they tell!

Here is Pan's green flower, the earth,
He has tended without dearth,
Brought to blossom, fruit, and seed
By the sap's imperious need,

When the season of the sun
Sets its fervour free to run,
Sap of tree and pith of man,
Ah, but they are dear to Pan!
Not a creature stirs or moves,
But Pan heartens and approves;
Not a being loves or dies,
But Pan knows the sacrifice.
Man or stripling, wife or maid,
Pan is ever by to aid;
And no harm can come to you,
But his great heart feels it, too.

Love's use let the joiner prove
By the fit of tongue and groove;
Or the smith, whose forge's play
Stubborn metal must obey;
Let the temple-builders own,
As they mortise stone to stone;

Or the sailor, when he reeves
Sheet and halliard through the sheaves ;
Or the potter, from whose wheel
Fair and finished shapes upsteal,
As by magic of command,
Guided by the loving hand.

Ye behold in love the tether
Binding the great world together ;
For without that coil of wonder
The round world would fall asunder,
And your hearts be filled with sadness
At a great god's seeming madness,
Where they now have peace, and hope,
Somewhere, somehow, some will ope,
And the loneliness be sated,
And the longing be abated
In the loved one, lovely past
All imagining at last,

Melting, fragrant, starry-eyed,
Like a garden in its pride,
Odorous with hint and rapture
Of soft joys no word can capture.

Ah, the sweet Pandean strain !
He who hears it once shall gain
Freedom of the open door,
Willing to go back no more.
When ye hear the sea pipes thunder,
Bow the loving heart in wonder ;
When ye hear the wood pipes play,
Lift the door latch and away ;
When ye hear the hill pipes calling,
Where the pure cold brooks are falling
Follow till your feet have found
The desired forgotten ground,
And ye know, past all unlearning,
By the raptured quench of yearning,

What the breath is to the reed ;
Whence the magic notes are freed,—
What new life the gods discover
To the loved one and the lover,
When their fabled dreams come true
In the wondrous fair and new.

For the music of the earth,
Helping joy-of-heart to birth,
(Field note, wood note, wild or mellow,
Bidding all things fare and fellow,)
Means that wisdom lurks behind
The enchantment of the mind ;
And your longing keen and tense
Still must trust the reel of sense,—
Hint of colour, form, and sound,—
Till it reach the perfect round,
And completed, blend its strain
With the haunted pipes again.

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Ye must learn the lift and thrill
That elate the wood pipes still;
Feel the ecstasy and shiver
Of the reed notes in the river;
Shudder to the minor trace
In the sea's eternal bass,
And give back the whole heart's treasure
To supreme the music's measure,
Glad that love should sink and sound
All the beauty in earth's bound.

All this loveliness which ran
Searching through the pipes of Pan,—
All this love must merge and blend
With Pan's piping in the end.
All the knowledge ye draw near
At the ripening of the year,
Living one day at a time,
Innocent of fear or crime,

(When the mountain slopes put on
Their brave scarlet in the sun.
When the sea assumes a blue
Such as April never knew,
And the marshes, fields, and skies
Sing with colour as day dies,
Peaceful, undistracted, free,
In your earth-born piety;
All the love when friend for friend
Dared misfortune to the end,—
Fronted failure, flouted harm,
For the sake of folding arm,—
Bravelier trod the earth, and bolder,
For the touch of hand on shoulder;
All the homely smiles and tears
Ever given childish years;
Every open, generous deed
Lending help to human need;
Every kindness to age,
Every impulse true and sage,

Lifting concord out of strife,
Bringing beauty into life :
These no feeble faith can ban
Ever from the pipes of Pan.

Think you Pan forgets the scheme
Or the cadence of his theme ?
Ah, your wit must still discover
No mere madness of a lover,
Headstrong, whimsical, and blind,
But a prompting, sane and kind,
Scope and purpose, hint and plan,
Lurking in the pipes of Pan ;
Calling ever, smooth and clear,
Courage to the heeding ear ;
Fluting ever, sweet and high,
Wisdom to the passer-by ;
Sounding ever, soft and far,
Happiness no grief can mar.

This enchantment Pan bequeaths
Unto every lip that breathes ;
Cunning unto every hand
Agile under will's command,
Unto every human heart
The inheritance of art,
Lighted only by a gleam
Of the dear and deathless dream,—
Power out of hurt and stain,
To bring beauty back again,
And life's loveliness restore
To a toiling age once more.

Yes, the world is growing old,
But the joys it used to hold,
Love and beauty, only grow
Greater as they come and go,—
Larger, keener, and more splendid,
Seen to be superbly blended,

As the cadenced years go by,
Into chord and melody,
Strong and clear as ever ran
Over the rude pipes of Pan.

*So the music passed and died
In the dark green mountain side ;
The entranced ravine took on
A new purple, faint and wan ;
And I heard across the bush
A far solitary thrush
From the hemlock, deep and still
Fluting day upon the hill.*

LEGENDS OF THE REED

MARSYAS,

IN Celænæ by Meander lived a youth
Once long ago,
And one passion great and splendid
Brimmed his heart to overflow,—
Filled the world for him with beauty,
sense and colour, joy and glow.

Not ambition and not power, love nor
luxury nor fame,
Beckoned him to join their pageant, sum-
moned Marsyas by name,
Bidding unreluctant spirit dare to keep
the soaring aim;

46 LEGENDS OF THE REED

But the sorceries of music, note and rap-
ture, tone and thrill,
Sounding the serene enchantment over
meadow, stream and hill,
Blew for him the undesisting magic call-
note, followed still.

And he followed. Heart of wonder, how
the keen blue smoke upcurled
From the shepherd huts to heaven! How
the dew lay silver-pearled
Where sleek-sided cattle wandered thro'gh
the morning of the world!

On a stream bank lay the idler dreaming
dreams—for it was Spring—
And he heard the frogs in chorus make
the watery marshes ring;
Heard new comers at their nesting in the
vineyards pipe and sing;

Heard the river lisp below him / heard
the wind chafe reed on reed ;

Every earth-imprisoned creature finding
vent and voice 'at need,

Ah ! if only so could mortal longing and
delight be freed !

Hark ! What piercing unknown cry comes
stealing o'er the forest ground,

Pouring sense and soul together in an
ecstasy new-found ?

Dream's fulfilment brought to pass and
life un tethered at a bound !

Then it pauses, and the youth beyond
the river-bend perceives

A divine one in her beauty stand, half-
hidden by the leaves,

Fingering a wondrous wood-pipe, whence
the clear sound joys or grieves.

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As he looked, entranced and musing at
the marvel of the strain,
All her loveliness uncinctured with a
madness touched his brain,
And love, like a vernal fever, dyed him
with its scarlet stain.

But Athene, glancing downward in the
silver of the stream,
As she fluted, saw her perfect mouth dis-
torted by a seam;
Faltered, stopped, and, disconcerted,
seemed to ponder half in dream

For a rueful moment; and then with re-
luctance tossed the reed
She had fashioned in a happy leisure
mood to serve her need
Back into the tranquil river, nothing but
a river weed,

All the cunning life that filled it quenched
and spilt and flung away,

To go seaward to oblivion on a wander-
ing stream. But stay!

The young Phrygian lad has seen it,—
marked the current set his way,—

Stooped and picked it from the water;

put the treasure-trove to lip;

Blown his first breath, faint yet daring

felt the wild notes crowd and slip

Into melody and meaning from each
testing finger-tip.

Then, ah, then had mortal spirit sweep
and room at last to range:

The lost limits of creation and the border-
lands of charge,

All earth's loveliness, transmuting into
something new and strange;

50 LEGENDS OF THE REED

All of beauty, all of knowledge, all of
wonder, fused and caught

In the rhythm of the music, weaving
out of sense and thought

"And a touch of love the fabric out of
which the world was wrought.

And the joy of each new cadence, as the
glad notes pressed and cried,

Eager for the strain's fulfilment, as they
rose and merged and died

"In the music's utmost measure, filled the
rose-grey mountain side, —

Touched the sheep-bells in the meadow,
moved the fishes in the stream,

And suffused the youth with glory as he
passed from theme to theme ;

Made him as the gods of morning in the
ampler air of dream.

Ah, what secret, what enchantment so
could help the human need,
Save the breath of life that lingered in
the hollow of the reed,
Since the careless mouth of beauty blessed
it—with so little heed?

There he stood, a youth transfigured in
the young world's golden glow.
Made immortal in a moment by the
music's melting flow,
Pattern of the artist's glory for the after
years to know.

There he stands for us in picture, with
the pipe whereon he plays;
The slow, large-eyed cattle wonder, and
the flocks forget to graze,
While upon the hill a shepherd turns and
listens in amaze.

52 LEGENDS OF THE REED

In the woods the timid creatures, reassured,
 approach and peer,
Half aware the charm's allurement they
 must follow as they hear
Is the first far-looked-for presage of the
 banishment of fear.

Silence falls upon the woodland, quiet
 settles on the plain;
Earth and air and the blue heaven, with-
 out harm or taint or stain,
Are restored to their old guise of large
 serenity again.

Thus the player at his piping in the
 early mode and grave
Took from Wisdom the inventress what
 the earth in bounty gave,
And therein to round completion put
 the beating heart and brave.

So, you artists and musicians, earth awaits
 perfection still ;

Wisdom tarries by the brookside, beauty
 loiters on the hill,

For the love that shall reveal them with
 the yet undreamed-of skill.

Love be therefore all your passion, the
 one ardour that ye spend

To enhance the craft's achievement with
 significance and trend,

Making faultless the wild strain that else
 were faulty to the end.

Love must lend the magic cadence—that
 unearthly dying fall

When the simple sweet earth-music takes
 us captive past recall,

And the loved one and the lover lose
 this world, nor care at all.

SYRINX

ONCE I saw (O breath of Summer!) in
the azure prime of June,
When the Northland takes her joy and
sets her wintered life in tune,
The soft wind come down the river, where
a heron slept at noon;

Stir the ripening meadow-grasses, lift the
lily-pads, and stray
Through the tall green ranks of rushes
bowing to its ghostly sway;
Then I heard it, like a whisper of the
world, take voice and say:

“Mortal, by the woodwind’s murmur and
the whisper of the stream,
I, who am the breath of grasses and the
soul of Summer’s dream,
Once was Syrinx, whom a great god loved
and lost and made the theme

“Of his mournful minor music. Nay, I
who had worn the guise,
Which allured him, yet eluded, vanishing
before his eyes,
When his heart held lonely commune,
taking counsel to devise

“Some new solace for sad lovers that
should give the spirit vent,
Lovelier than speech of mortals where the
stricken soul is pent
And the longing gropes for language large
enough for beauty’s bent;

55 LEGENDS OF THE REED

“When he drew the reeds and ranged
them, rank by rank from low to shrill,
Bound them with the flax together—I was
inspiration still,
I was heartache crying through them, I
was echo on the hill.

“And forever I am cadence, joyous, well-
ing, sad, or fond,”
When the breath of god or mortal, breaking
time’s primeval bond,
Blows upon the mouths of wood and all
the mellow throats respond.

“Not a flute, but I have hidden in its
haunted hollow mouth;
In the deep Sicilian twilight, when the
shepherd piped to fold,
I have been the eerie calling of the Pan
pipes rude and old;

‘ From the ivory monaulos, when the soft
Egyptian stars
Sentry’d Cleopatra’s gardens, through the
open window-bars
I went forth, a splendid torment, o’er the
dreaming nenuphars.

“ In the silver-mounted laurel played by
some Byzantine boy,
I was frenzy, when the throng night after
night went mad for joy,
As the dancer Theodora made the Emperor
her toy.

“ In the boxwood bound with gold I drew
my captives down the Nile
To the love-feasts of Bubastis, lovers by
the thousand file,
Willing converts to my love-call, children
of the changeless smile.

58 LEGENDS OF THE REED

"Babylonian Mylitta heard me keep the
limpid tune,

When the lovers danced before her at
the feast of the new moon,

'Till the rosy flowers of beauty through
her sacred groves were strewn.

"And Sidonian Astarte and the Asian
Cypriote

Knew the large, unhurried measure of
my earth-sweet pagan rote,

When the dancing youths before them
followed me from note to note.

"Where some lithe Bithynian flute-boy
nude and golden in the sun,

Set his red mouth to the twin pipes, I
was in each pause and run,

When his manhood took the meaning
of the love-notes one by one.

“And amid the fields of iris by the blue
Ionian sea,

I was solemn-hearted sweetness and pure
passion soon to be

In the dark-haired little maid who piped
her budding melody.

“I was youth and love and rapture, I
was madness in their veins,

Calling through the heats of Summer

calling in the soft Spring rains,

From the olive Phrygian hillsides and
the deep Bœotian plains.

“I but blew, and mortals followed; I

but breathed, and they were glad,—

King and mendicant and sailor, courtesan

and shepherd lad;

For there is no creed nor canon laid on
music's myriad.

50 LEGENDS OF THE REED

“Not a tribe nor race nor people born
 in darkest savagery,
Dwellers in the Afric forest or the islands
 of the sea,
But I wooed them from their war-drums
 —made them gentle—set them free.”

“Silence fell upon the tam-tams throbbing
 terror through the night,
And the prayer-gongs ceased to conjure
 cowering villages with fright,
When my cool note, clear as morning,
 called them to a new delight.

“I, the breath of flute and oboe, golden
 wood and silver reed,
Put away their fear, and taught them
 with my love-tone to give heed,
When the love grew large within them,
 to the lovely spirit's need.”

'Henceforth no mere frantic rhythm of
beating foot and patting hand,
Nor monotonous marimba could suffice for
soul's demand,
When Joy called her wayworn children
and Peace wandered through the land.

"Love must build a better music than
the strumming tambourine
To ensphere his worlds of wonder, height,
and depth and space between,
Pleasure-lands for Soul, the lover, to
preëempt as his demesne.

"So he took the simple reed-note, as a
dewdrop clear and round,
Blew it (magic of creation!) to the
tenuous profound
Of sheer gladness, light and colour of
the universe of sound.

62 LEGENDS OF THE REED

“And there soars the shining structure,
 to₂ on tone as star on star.

Spheres of knowl₂edge and of beauty,
 where love's compensations are,

And the plenitudes of spirit move to
 rhythm without a jar ;

“Every impulse in its orbit swinging to,
 the utmost range

Of the normal sweep of being, through
 unfathomed gulfs of change,

Poised, unswerved, and never finding
 aught unlovely or unstrange.

“When some dark Peruvian lover set
 the love-flute to his lip,

I was the new soft enchantment loosed
 upon the dusk, to slip

Through the trees, and thrill the loved
 one from warm nape to finger-tip ;

“Till she could not choose but follow
where my player piped for her ;

So I roused the love within her, set the
gypsy pulse astir,

With my wild delicious pleading, strong
as incense, fine as myrrh.

“When for love the Winnëbago took his
courting-flute and played

His wild theme for days together near the
lodge door of his maid,

It was ritual and rapture of the triumph
he essayed.

“And my brown Malayan lovers pierce
the living gold bamboo,

For the lone melodious accents of the wind
to wander through,

While my haunting spirit tells them many
a secret old and true.

64 LEGENDS OF THE REED

“In the soft Sumatran pan-flute with its
seven notes I plead ;

am help to the Marquesan in his slender
scarlet reed ;

From the immemorial East, I draw my
dark-eyed gypsy breed.

Chukma, Dyak, Mahalaka, Papuan and
Ashanti

Hillmen from the Indian snows, canoemen
from the Carib sea,

Tribesmen from the world's twelve corners,
at my whisper come to me—

“All the garlanded earth-children in their
gala bright array,

Laughing like the leaves, or sighing like
the grass-heads which I sway ;

For my lure is swift to lead them, and
my solace strong to stay.

“And the road must melt before them and
their piping fill all lands,
Till a new world at their fluting like a
magic flower expands,
And Soul's unexplored dominion is sur-
rendered to their hands.

“Did not I, the woodbreath, calling, make
thy mortal pulses ring,
And thy many-seasoned roof-tree with its
dusty rafters sing?
Was not I the long, sweet love-throb in
the music-house of Spring?

“Think how all the golden willows and
the maples, crimson-keyed,
Kept the rare appointed season, flowering
at the instant need,
When the wood-pipes gave my summons
and the marshy flutes were freed!

66 LÉGENDS OF THE REED

“Love be, then, in every heart-beat, when
the year comes round to June,
And life reaches up to rapture, lingering
on the perfect tune,
As this evening in your valley silvered
by the early moon.”

Thus I heard the voice of Syrinx, by
the dreamy river shore,
Sift and cease, as one might pass through
a large room and close the door;
And I knew myself a stranger on this
lovely earth no more.

, THE MAGIC FLUTE

HEAR, O Syrinx, thou lost dryad !

Marsyas, thou mortal, hear !

If to lovely and free spirits it is granted
to draw near

And revisit the whole earth from some
far off and twilight sphere,

Like the limpid star of evening hanging
o'er the dark hill brow,

Globed in light to touch this valley where
a worshipper I bow,

O. give heed, and of your wisdom help
a mortal lover now !

68 LEGENDS OF THE REED

Lend him, novice at your 'flute-work,
 learner of the magic cry,
Something, howsoever faulty, of that cunning
 ecstasy,—
The inevitable cadence where the raptures
 pause and die,—

You could marshal at your bidding from
 the wind-blown river reeds,—
Mark to rhythm and mould to beauty,—
 plastic for perfection's needs;
Skill to give the spirit lodgment where
 the longing fancy leads!

Souls of lovers lost in music! You who
 were beloved of Pan,
Piping madness through the meadow
 where the silver river ran;
You who, favoured of Athene, found her
 careless gift to man,—

Ô stray hither, and recalling some such
earth-born golden hour
When the thrushes eased their sorrow, and
the laurel was in flower,
Give this lost child of nature one
least pittance of your power!

So he shall be well accounted love's own
minstrel first and best,
By another shy wild Syrinx when he puts
the gift to test,
For a single day immortal. And the
gods make good the rest!

Hear, sweetheart, the lonely thrushes,
pure and pleading up the clove
From the dark moon-haunted hemlocks,
and the spacious dim beech grove,
Pierced by love's own silver planet with
a path for us to rove,

70 LEGENDS OF THE REED

Comes the rapture, clear, unsullied, un-
distracted, undismayed,
Heart of earth that still remembers how
her strength and joy were made,
When the breath of life was given and
the touch of doom was stayed,—

The great joyance of creation welling
through the world once more ;
Love in power and pride and passion,
crying still at beauty's door ;
Soul in contemplation, ranging the star-
lighted forest floor.

Once . . . O little girl, lift up that dear
wild tender wood-nymph's face,
To your lover's who so loves you, gladden-
ing all this leafy place,
Where as music merged, in moonshine
sense and spirit interlace !

THE MAGIC FLUTE 71.

In the first of time was Hathor, the
Egyptian Ashtoreth,
She who bore the mighty Sun and
quicken'd nature with her breath,
Rocked the cradle of the Nile and gave
men life and gave them death.

Once to share her mysteries, when earth
grew green with spring, there came
To her temple in Bubastis, needy and
unknown to fame,
A young herdsman golden-haired and tall,
Argalioth by name.

And his undeflower'd beauty, fair as
lotus, slim as palm,
With his voice like sweet hill-water
sounding in the choric psalm,
Touched the mighty heart there brooding
in inviolable calm.

72 LEGENDS OF THE REED

And a sigh as of the wind arose; the
 song was hushed; the veil
Of the Shrine, which none might enter,
 moved and shimmered like a sail
Or the golden boreal lights that hang
 across our Northern trail.

In astonishment the dancers halted. Then
 the voice said, "Peace!
Let my son Argalioth come near! It is
 a gift of peace.
Henceforth, only truth, and goodness,
 finding virtue, shall find peace."

Then the lad arose and went behind the
 veil, and all was still.
Slowly, as from out all distance, rising
 far and fine and shrill,
Came a flute-note, strong as sea-wind,
 clear as morning on the hill,

THE MAGIC FLUTE 73

Grew and gained and swelled and
triumphed, lingering from tone to tone,
Golden, deep to silver treble, pure and
passionate and lone,
Marking time to things eternal, touching
bounds of spirit's zone.

Filling all the space between with all the
wonder and despair—
Reach and compass and fulfilment soul
could ever dream or dare—
Of the bliss beyond all telling, when the
wild sense grows aware.

Then before those spell-bound watchers
From the Holy Place returned
The youth, girt in scarlet linen, with a
countenance where burned
The great glory of his vision and the
secret he had learned.

74 LEGENDS OF THE REED

In his hand a yellow flute-reed bound
 with seven silver bands ;
From brown foot to red-gold hair a
 figure that might haunt all lands
With distraction and enthrallment, while
 this earth in beauty stands.

Not a word he spoke ; serenely trod the
 marble to the door ;
Set the flute to mouth, and piping strains
 no ear had heard before,
Passed out through the golden weather,
 and no man beheld him more.

Yet there lingered, ah, what music ! Not
 a listener in that throng,
Through the years that came upon him,
 but at times would hear the long
Piercing and melodious cadence, summer-
 sweet and autumn-strong,

THE MAGIC FLUTE 75

Heard so long ago; and always, as if
musing, he would say,
“It is, Hathor’s magic flute;” In some blue
valley far away,
By a well among the palms, her wanderer
has paused to play!”

For through all the earth he wandered
with his magic pipe; and none
Heard that piping, but they straightway
knew that their old life was done,
And the glamour was upon them, pru-
dence lost and freedom won.

He it was who touched with madness, soft
sweet madness of the spring,
The green-throated frogs, whose chorus
makes the grassy meadows ring,
And the birds, who come with April and
must break their heart or sing;

76 LEGENDS OF THE REED

Touched his fellow mortals even with a
 madness of the mind,
Till they too must rise and follow, leaving,
 sober tasks behind,
'While a thing called love possessed them
 with a craving sweet and blind,

And they knew no fear thereafter, save
 the one supreme despair,—
Having loved to lose the loved one, the
 one lovely friend could share
The vast loneliness of being. What mute
 bitterness were there!

And we all are Hathor's children, brothers
 of the frogs and birds,
Who have listened once forever to the pipe
 whose magic words
None can fathom, though we follow
 dumbly as the flocks and herds.

Thenceforth howsoe'er we wander, all our
care is but to know

Truth, the Sinceress whose spell of beauty
can entrance us so,

As it was with happy lovers in their
wisdom long ago.

And to all men once a lifetime comes that
music sweet and shrill,

Pleading for the life's perfection, goods

preferment over ill,

Beauty's issue from debasement, the de-
liverance of will.

Many hear it not, or hearing turn with
heedless hearts away,

Or their soul is deaf with greed or lust or
anger or dismay,

And the precious fateful moment passes,

But the wise are they,

78 LEGENDS OF THE REED

Who preserve without disquiet the serene
and open mind,
The impassioned poise of spirit, lodged in
senses more refined,
Than the quaking aspen breathed on by
the unseen secret wind.

Soe in spite of tears and turmoil many a
radiant hour they know,
Hearing o'er the roofs of men the far off
magic woodpipes blow,
With a message for the morrow bidding
them arise and go.

And that message? What I cherish most,
this sweet white night of June,
When from sheath of fragrant lace-work
slips one shoulder, like the moon
From the pine-tops with a lustre such as
made its lover swoon.

Once on Latmus ; when your hair falls,
 like a vine the stars peep through ;
 When I kiss your heart out, much as
 mighty Pan the reed-pith drew,
 And your breath in one "Beloved!"
 answers like the reed he blew ;

What I prize most and most treasure,
 is this knowledge great and sure :
 He who knows love, knows the secret,—
 he who has love has the lure,—
 Of the strain whereto this earth was
 moulded well and must endure.

Hush, ah, hush ! Lie still ! The music
 is not yet gone from the firſt,
 Haply here the Ancient Mother, in this
 solitude of hers,
 Where the mighty veil of silence, leaves
 and stars, the hill-wind stirs,

80 LEGENDS OF THE REED

Some new larger revelation would vouch-
safe to you and me,
Of the sorceries of summer, or the secret
of the sea,
Whose sheer beauty shall enthral us,
while its truth shall set us free.

O my golden Syrinx, surely we have
heard the magic flute,
Whose dark, wild mysterious transport in
a moment can transmute
All the heart and life forever, making
spirits that were mute

Musical and glad! And we have listened
to that lost flute-strain,
Whose long, sweet and sobbing minor is
the record of the rain,—
Whose proud passion is the gladness when
the spring comes back again.

THE MAGIC FLUTE 81

Hark, the thrushes at their fluting! The
old wizardry and stress
Of entrancement are upon them. Wise
ones of the wilderness,
Who can say but they have burdens of
a joy beyond our guess?

Long since did the magic minstrel take
them silent from the bough
In his hands, and with the secret breath
of life their throats endow,
As this rose-red mouth of beauty burning
meward I do now!

A SHEPHERD IN LESBOS

ALL night long my cabin roof resounded
With the mighty murmur of the rain;
All night long I heard the silver cohorts
Tramping down the valley to the plain;

All night long the ringing rain-drops
Volleyed
On the hollow drum-heads of the leaves
In a wild tattoo, while gusty hill-winds
Fifed The Young Pans' March about the
eaves.

So all night within the mountain forest,
Passed the shadowy forces at review;
And they bore me back to time's beginning
When the wonder of the world was new.

A SHEPHERD IN LESBOS 83

Then from out the gloom there came a
vision

Of the beauty of the earth of old,—
The unclouded face and gracious figure,
Filletted with laurel and green-stoled,

Such as Daphne wore the day she
wandered

Through the silent beech-wood of the
god,

When a sunray through the roof of shadows
Wheeled and stole behind her where she
trod.—

When the loveliness of earth, transfigured
By one touch of rapture, grew divine,
Ere it fled before the unveiled presence
To in-dwell forever its green shrine.

84 LEGENDS OF THE REED

Like a mist I saw the hair's gold glory,
The graye eyes, the childish scarlet lip,
And the rose-pink fervour that afforded
Soul the sheath to fill from tip to tip.

On her mouth she laid a warning finger,
And her slow calm enigmatic smile
Told me, ere she spoke, one half the
message ;
Then I heard (my heart stood still the
while),

“Mortal, wouldst thou know the maddening
transport.”

No mere earth-born lover may attain,
Till some woodland deity hath loved him,
And her beauty mounted to his brain?

A SHEPHERD IN LESBOS 85

"Thenceforth he becomes, with her for
mistress,

Master of the moods and minds of men,
Moulding as he will their deeds and
daring,

All their follies open to his ken ;

"Yet is he a wanderer forever,

Without respite seeking the unknown.

Wouldst thou leave the world for one,
who offers

But the beauty bounded by her zone?"

When I woke in golden morning dyeing

The dark valley and the purple hill,

Flushing at the doorway of the forest,

Flowered my mountain laurel, cool and
still.

86 LEGENDS OF THE REED

How I chose? Have ye not heard, in

Lesbos

Of a mad young shepherd by the shore,
Whose wild piping bids the traveller tarry
Some immortal sorrow to deplore?

On a morning by the river margins

Many a passer-by hath heard that strain,
Sweet and sad and strange and full of
longing

As a bird-note through the purple rain.

In a maze the haunted music holds them

With its meaning past all guess or care;
With its magic note the lonely cadence
Swells and sinks and dies upon the air;

A SHEPHERD IN LESBOS 87

And they say, "It is the stricken shepherd

Whom the nymph's enchantment set

astray,

And the spell of his bewildering vision

Holds him fast a lover from that day.

"His dark theme no mortal may interpret ;

But forever when the wood-pipes blow,

Some remembered and mysterious echo

Calls us unresisting and we go."

Dear, shy, soft face,
With just the elfin trace
That lends thy human beauty the last touch
Of wild, elusive grace!

Can it be true,
A god did once pursue
Thy gleaming beauty through the glimmer-
ing wood,
Drenched in the Dorian dew,
Too mad to stay
His hot and headstrong way,
Demented by the fragrance of thy flight,
Heedless of thy dismay?

But I to thee
More gently fond would be,
Nor less a lover woo thee with soft words.
And woodland melody;

Take pipe and play
Each forest fear away;
Win thee to idle in the leafy shade
All the long summer day;

Tell thee old tales
Of love, that still avails
More than all mighty things in this great
world,
Still wonder works nor fails;

Teach thee new lore,
How to love more and more,
And find the magical delirium
In joys unguessed before.

I would try over
And over to discover
Some wild, sweet, foolish, irresistible
New way to be thy lover—

New, wondrous ways
To fill thy golden days,
Thy lovely pagan body with delight,
Thy loving heart with praise.

For I would learn,
Deep in the brookside fern,
The magic of the syrinx whispering low.
With bubbly fall and turn;

Mock every note
Of the green woodbird's throat,
Till some wild strain, impassioned yet serene,
Should form and float

Far through the hills,
Where mellow sunlight fills
The world with joy, and from the purple vines
The brew of life distils.

Ah, then indeed

Thy heart should have no need

To tremble at a footfall in the brake,

And bid thy bright limbs speed.

But night would come,

And I should make thy home

In the deep pines, lit by a yellow star

Hung in the dark blue dome—

A fragrant house

Of woven balsam boughs,

Where the great Cyprian mother should
receive

Our warm unsullied vows

THE LOST DRYAD

WHERE are you gone from the forest,
Leaving the mountain-side lonely
And all the beech woods deserted,
O my dear Daphne?

All the day long I go seeking
Trace of your flowerlike footprint.
Will not the dew on the meadow
Tell tale of Daphne?

Will not the sand on the sea-shore
Treasure that magical impress
For the disconsolate longing
Lover of Daphne?

Will not the moss and the fern-bed
Bearing the mould of her beauty,
Tell me where wandered and rested
Rose-golden Daphne?

All the night through I go hearkening
Every wild murmurous echo,—
Hint of your laughter,—the birdlike
Voice of my Daphne.

Why do the poplar leaves whisper
Things to themselves in the silence,
Though no wind visits the valley,
Daphne, my Daphne?

Listen! I hear their small voices,
An elfin multitude, mingle,
Lispering in silver-leaf language,
“Daphne, O Daphne!”

Listen! I hear the cold hill-brook
 Plash down the clove on its pebbles,
 And the ravine drenched in moonlight
 Echoing, "Daphne!"

"Daphne," the rain says at nightfall;
 "Daphne," the wind breathes at morning;
 And a voice troubles the hot noon
 Uttering "Daphne."

Ah, what impassioned remembrance,
 In the dark pines in the starlight,
 Touches the dream of your wood-thrush,
 O my lost Daphne.

Dyeing his sleep like a bubble
 Coloured for joy, and the note comes,
 Golden, enchanted, eternal,
 Calling for Daphne!

O Mother Earth, at how many
 Thresholds of lone-dwelling mortals
 Must I, a wayfarer, tarry,
 Asking for Daphne?

How many times see their faces
 Fade to incredulous wonder,
 Hearing in some remote vale
 The story of Daphne;

Ere I at last through the twilight
 Hear the soft rapturous outcry,
 And as of old there will greet me
 Far-wandered Daphne?

THE DEAD FAUN

Who hath done this thing? What wonder
is this that lies
On the green earth so still under purple
skies,
Like a hyacinth shaft the careless mower
has cut
And thought of no more?

Who hath wrought this pitiful wrong on
the lovely earth?
What ruthless hand could ruin that harm-
less mirth?
O heart of things, what undoing is here,
never now,
To be mended more!

No more, O beautiful boy, shall thy fleet
feet stray

Through the cool beech wood on the
shadowy mountain way,

Nor halt by the well at noon, nor trample
the flowers

On the forest floor.

Thy beautiful light-seeing gold-green eyes,
so glad

When day came over the hill, so wondrous
sad

When the burning sun went slowly under
the sea,

Shall look no more.

Thy nimble fingers that plucked the fruit
from the bough,

Or fondled the nymph's bright hair and
filleted brow,

Or played the wild mellow pipe of thy
father Pan,
Shall play no more.

Thy sensitive ears that knew all the speech
of the wood,
Every call of the birds and the creatures,
and understood
What the wind to the water said, what
the river replied,
Shall hear no more.

Thy scarlet and lovely mouth which the
dryads knew,
Dear whimsical ardent mouth, that love
spoke through,
For all the kisses of life that it took and
gave,
Shall say no more.

Who hath trammelled those feet that
never again shall rove?

Who hath bound these hands that never
again shall move?

Who hath quenched the lamp in those
eyes that never again
Shall be lighted more?

Who hath stopped those ears from our
heart-broken words forever?

Who hath sealed that wonderful mouth
with its secret forever?

Who hath touched this innocent being
with pitiless death,

And he is no more?

He was fair as a mortal and spiritual as
a flower;

He knew no hate, but was happy within
the hour.

THE DEAD FAUN 101

The Gods had given him beauty and
freedom and joy,

Could they give no more?

Is all their wisdom and power so fond a
thing?

Must he perish, nor ever return with
returning Spring,

But be left like a dead-ripe fruit on the
ground for a stranger

To find and deplore?

They have given to mortal man the im-
mortal scope,

The perilous chance, unrest and remem-
brance and hope,

That imperfection may come to perfection
still

By some fabled shore.

102 ' THE DEAD FAUN

Did they give this being, this marvellous
work of their hands,
No breath of the greater life with its
grief and demands?
Do beauty and love without bitter know-
ledge attain
This and no more?

The wind may whisper to him, he will
heed no more;
The leaves may murmur and lisp, he
will laugh no more;
The oreads weep and be heavy at heart
for him,
He will care no more.

The reverberant thrushes may peal from
the hemlock glooms,
The summer clouds be woyen on azure
looms;

He is done with all lovely things of
earth forever
And ever more.

'HYLAS'

COOL were the grey-mottled beeches,
Quiet with noon were the fern-beds,
Where by the bubbling spring water
Tarried young Hylas.

Whistling a song of the rowers,
Dipping his jar till it gurgled,
Suddenly there the bright naiads
(Woe for thee, Hylas!)

Looked and beheld his fair beauty
Better than well-head, and straightway
Exquisite longing possessed them
Only for Hylas.

When he returned not at sundown,
"Over long," said his companions,
As slow dismay came upon them,
"Tarries young Hylas."

Never again did his comrades
Find the lost rower, nor maidens
See from their doorways at twilight
Home-coming Hylas.

Thenceforth another must labour
To the timed thud of his rowlock,
And only legends keep tally
Of the lost Hylas.

Yet even now, when the springtime
Visits the valley, and rain-winds
Voyage for lands undiscovered,
As once did Hylas,

With a great star on the hill-crest
In purple evening, a flute-note
Pierces the hush, and a voice calls,
“Hylas, Hylas!”

AT PHÆDRA'S TOMB

WHAT old grey ruin can this be,
Beside the blue Saronic Sea?

What tomb is this, what temple here,
Thus side by side so many a year?

This is that temple Phædra built
To Aphrodite, having split

Her whole heart's great warm love in
vain,

One lovely mortal's love to gain,
Yet trusting by that fervent will,
Consuming and unconquered still,
In spite of failure and of fate,
By favour of the gods to sate

108 AT PHÆDRA'S TOMB

Her splendid lost imperious
 Mad love for young Hippolytus,
 Whose brilliant beauty seemed to glow
 Like a tall Alp in rosy snow,
 While love and passion, wind and fire,
 Flared through the field of her desire.

"Great Mother, come from Paphos now
 With benediction on thy brow,
 And pity! Not beneath the sun
 Lives such another hapless one.
 O Aphrodite of the sea,
 For love have mercy upon me!
 Give me his beauty now to slake
 This body's longing and soul's ache
 Touch his cold heart until he know
 The divine sorrow of love's woe."

What madness hers, what folly his!
 And all their beauty come to this.

Epitome of mortal doom—

A name, a story, and a tomb!

Have ye not seen the fog from sea

On Autumn mornings silently

Steal in to land, and wrap the sun

With its grey, cold oblivion?

The goddess would not smile on her,

On him no gentler mood confer.

He still must flush his maiden whim;

She still must leash her love for him,

A fancy lawless and superb,

Too wild to tame, too strong to curb,

Too great for her to swerve or stay

In our half-hearted modern way.

Have ye not seen the fog from land

Blow out to sea, and leave the band

Of orange marsh and lilac shore

To brood in Autumn peace once more?

110 AT PHÆDRA'S TOMB

So there survives the māgic fame
 Of her imperishable name,—
 Light from 'a time when love was, great,
 And strong hearts had no fear of fate,
 But lived and strove and wrought and
 died,
 With beauty for their only guide.

And yet this temple raised and wrought
 With prayers and tears, availed her naught.
 The years with it have had their will;
 Her soft name is a by-word still
 For thwarted spirit, vexed and teased
 By yearnings that cannot be eased,—
 The soul that chafes upon the mesh
 Of tenuous yet galling flesh.

How blue that midday shadow is
 In the white dust of Argolis!

AT PHÆDRA'S TOMB III,

This is her tomb. . . . See, near at hand,
 This myrtle! Here she used to stand
 Those days when her love-haunted eyes
 Saw her new-built hope arise,
 Watching the masons set the stone,
 And fingering her jewelled zone,
 Or moving restless to and fro,
 Her pale brows knit a little, so.

Look! every leaf pierced through and
 through!
 I doubt not the gold pin she drew
 From her dark hair, and, as the storm
 Of love swept through her lovely form
 With pique and passion, thrust on thrust,
 Vented her vehemence. O dust,
 That once contemplated such a flame
 With beauty, colour, line and name,
 And gave great Love a dwelling-place
 Behind so fair, so sad, a face,

, 112 AT PHÆDRA'S TOMB

Where is thy wilful day-dream now,
That passionate lip, that moody brow?

Ah, fair Greek woman, if there bloom
Some flower of knowledge in the gloom,
Receive the piteous, loving sigh

Of one more luckless passer-by.

Peace, peace, wild heart! Unsatisfied
Has every mortal lived and died,

Since thy dear beauty found a bed

Forever with the dreaming dead.

In seagirt Hellas long ago,

Immortal for thy mortal woe!

THE PRAYER OF THE REED PLAYER

O PIPES of Pan,

Make me a man,

As only your piercing music can!

When I set my lip

To your reedy lip,

And you feel the urging man-breath slip

Through fibre and flake,

Bidding you wake

To the strange new being for beauty's sake,

I pray that be

Returned to me

The strength of the hills and the strength
of the sea.

O river reed,
In whom ~~the~~ need
Of the journeying river once was freed,
As of old your will
Was the water's will,
To quiver and call or sleep and be still,

So now anew
I breathe in you
The ardour no alchemy can subdue,
And add the dream,—
The immortal gleam
That never yet fell on meadow or
stream.

I breathe and blow
On your dumb mouth so,
Till your lurking soul is alive and aglow.
Ah, breathe in me.

OF THE REED PLAYER 115

The strength of the sea,
The calm of the hills and the strength of
the sea!

Love, joy, and fear,
From my faint heart here,
Shall melt in your cadence wild and clear.
With freedom and hope
I range and grope,
Till I find new stops in your earthly scope.

The pleading strain
Of pathos and pain,
The diminished chord and the lost refrain;
The piercing sigh,
The joyous cry,
The sense of what shall be bye and bye;

The grief untold
Out of man's heart old,

Which endures that another may still be
bold ;

The wise will
That foregoes self-will
And aspires to truth beyond trammel or ill ;

Ambition unsure,
And the splendid lure
Of whim in his harlequin vestiture ;
And the reach of sound
Into thought's profound ;
All these I add to your power 'earth-
bound ;

But most, the awe
That perceives where law
Is revealed at last without fault or flaw,—
The touch of mind
That would search and find
The measure of beauty, the purpose of kind.

OF THE REED PLAYER 117

So with the fire
Of man's desire
Your notes shall outreach the mountain
choir.

Brook, breeze, and bird
Shall hear the Word,
And know 'tis their master they have
heard.

And the lowly reed,
Whose only need
Was to sigh with the wind in the river
weed,

Shall be heard as far
As from star to star,
Where Algol answers to Algebar.

For the soul must trace
Her wondrous race
By a seventh sense on the charts of space

Till she come at last,
Through the vague and vast,
To her own heart's haven fixed and fast.

O pipes of Pan,
Whose music ran
Through the world ere ever my age
began,
When I set my lip
To your woodland lip,
To pray some draft of your virtue slip,

From each mellow throat,
As note by note,
A learner, I try for the secret rote,—
The rhythm and theme
That shall blend man's dream
Of perfection with nature's imperfect
scheme!

OF THE REED PLAYER 119

Blow low, blow high,
Your haunting cry
For me, a wayfarer passing by;
Blow soft or keen,
I shall listen and lean
To catch what your whispered messages
mean.

I shall hear and heed
The voice of the reed,
And be glad of my kinsfolk's word,
indeed.

I shall hearken and hear
Your untroubled cheer
From the earth's deep heart, serene and
clear.

Blow cold and shrill
As the wind from the hill,
I yet shall follow to learn your will;

Blow soft and warm
As an April storm,
I shall listen and feel my soul take
form.

Blow glad and strong
As the grosbeak's song,
And I mount with you over hurt and
wrong;
Blow little and thin
As the cricket's din;
But my door is wide, and I bid them in.

Blow, blow till there be
Inbreathed in me
Tinge of the loam and tang of the sea,—
A vagrom man,
Favoured of Pan,
Made out of ardour and sinew and tan,

OF THE REED PLAYER 121

With the seeing eye
For meadow and sky,
The want only beauty can satisfy,
And the wandering will,
The questing will,
The inquisitive, glad, unanxious will,

That must up and away
On the brave essay
Of the fair and far through the long sweet
day,—
Of the fine and true,
The wondrous and new,
All the warm radiant bright world through.

Blow me the tune
Of the ripe red moon,
I shall sleep like a child by the roadside
soon ;

And the tune of the sun ;
When our piping is done,
Lo, others shall finish what we have begun.

For the spell we cast
Shall prevail at last,—
When fault is forgotten and failure past,—
Prevail and restore
To earth once more
The lost enchantment, the wanderlore.

And I must attain
To the road again,
With the wandering dust and the wander-
ing rain,—

A sojourner too
My way pursue,
Who am spirit and substance, even as you.

OF THE REED PLAYER 123.

Then give me the slow
Large will to grow,
As your fellows down by the brookside
grow.
Ah, blow, and breed
In my manhood's need
The long sweet patience of flower and
seed!

O pipes of Pan,
Make me a man,
As only your earthly music can;
And create in me
From your melody
The strength of the hills and the strength
of the sea!

THE TIDINGS TO OLAF

*THIS is a question arose in the Norseland
long ago,
About the time of Yule, the season of joy
and snow.
To-morrow, our Christmas Day, can you
answer straight and true,
After these thousand years, when the question
comes to you?*

Olaf sat on his throne, and the priest of
Thor stood by ;
And the King's eyes were grey as the
December sky.

Whom shall we serve, O King—the god
 of thy fathers, Thor,
 Who made us lords of the sea, and gave
 us our land in war,

Who follows our battle flag over the
 barren brine,

Who braces the bursting heart when the
 rowers bend in line,

“Who hath made us the fear of the world,
 and the envy of the earth,

Whose splendour sustains us in death, who
 hath given us plenty for dearth,

“Or this poor, thought-ridden Jew, an
 outcast whose head was priced

At thirty pieces of silver, this friendless
 an^ar^archist, Christ?

126 THE TIDINGS TO OLAF

"Is not thine empire spread over the
Western Isles?

Are not thy people sown wherever the
sun-path smiles?

"Do there not come to thee iron and
gems and corn?

Does not thy glory blaze wherever our
trade is borne?

"Over the red sea-rim thy galleys go down
with the sun;

Beyond the gates of the storm thy written
mandates run.

"Behold, new lands arise to the lift of
thy daring prows,

And health and riches and joy prosper
thy fir-built house.

THE TIDINGS TO OLAF 127

Is there lack to thee of aught the
strength of thy folk can give,
When the will and the longing come to
stretch out thy hand and live?

Honey and fruit and wine, are they not
piled on the board?

Do not a hundred tribes pay tribute to
our Lord?

Olaf, beloved of the gods! Is there an
outland tongue,

Is there an isle of the sea where thy praise
has not been sung?

Scarlet and silk and gold gleam on thy
breast and brow.

Had the kings of the earth of old such
honour and freedom as thou?

128 THE TIDINGS TO OLAF

"Might and dominion and power and
majesty are they not thine?
Will the seed of warrior kings dishonour
the war-god's shrine?"

"O King, do I speak this day in thy
name, or forevermore

Let perish the ancient creed? By thy
grace, is it Christ or Thor?"

Olaf sat on his throne. And the Prince
of Thor gave place

To a pale dark monk. All eyes were
bent on the stranger's face.

"O King, how shall I speak and answer
this wisdom of old?"

Yet the new trees of the forest spring up
where the old are felled.

When the sombre and ancient firs are
laid in the dust, in your North,
The tender young green of the birch and
the delicate aspen put forth.

“Is the land left naked and bare, because
the brush-fires have run?

Ye have seen the soft carpet of fern spread
down where the blackening was done.

“With beauty God covers the ground,
no acre too poor to befriend,
That thou and I and all men may perceive
and comprehend.

“He carries the sea in His hand, He lights
the stars in the sky,
And whispers over thy soul as the shadows
move on the rye.

130 THE TIDINGS TO OLAF

"The King has his kingly state, but his
heart is the heart of man,
Swept over by clouds of grief, then sun-
lit with joy for a span.

"And every living spirit that is clothed
with flesh and bone
Is just so much of God's being, His
presence revealed and known.

"We are part of God's breath, as the
gust, whereby thy hearth-fire is fanned,
Is part of the wild north-wind that roll
the breakers to land.

"We are a part of His life, as the waves
are a part of the sea,
A moment uplift in the sun, then merged
in eternity.

"What is it, O man and King, that
stretches between us twain,
Like the living tides that gird the islands
of the main?

"What lifts thy name, Olaf, aloft on the
shout of thy folk in war?

What keeps it warm by the hearth? Is
it the favour of Thor?

"No! 'Tis the love of thy people, the
great common love of thy kind,
The thing that is old as the sun and
stronger than the wind.

"And, Olaf, all these things, these goods
which thy priest proclaims,
That make thee a lord among men, and
give thee a name above names,

132 THE TIDINGS TO OLAF

"Are gifts of the spirit of love. Take
away love, and thy throne
Melts like a word on the air; thou art
a name unknown.

"Is the King heavy at heart, and no man
can tell him why;
What does his glory avail to put the
heaviness by?

"But like any poor nameless man among
men, the mighty King
Is heartened among his folk by the simple
love they bring.

"Is the King weary in mind, and none
can lighten his mood;
What cheers him to power anew, but
thought of his people's good?"

To love, to know, and to do ! So we
 grow perfect apace,
 The human made more divine, as the old
 to the new gives place.

“ But who will show us the way,—be
 lantern, and staff and girth ?
 Where is the Light of the World, and the
 Sweetness of the Earth ?

“ The King has a thousand men, yet one
 more brave than the rest ;
 The King has a hundred bards, yet one
 the wisest and best ;

“ The King has a score of friends, yet one
 most accounted of.

And now, if these three were one in
 courage, in wisdom and love,

134 THE THIDINGS TO OLAF

"There were the matchless friend, whose
cause should enlist all lands,
Gentle, intrepid, and true. And there,
O King, Christ stands.

"Freedom and knowledge and joy, not
mine nor any man's,
But open to all the earth without pro-
scription or bans,

"Where is the bringer of these? His
hand is upon thy door.

And He who knocks, O King, is a greater
God than Thor.

"Oaf, 'tis Yule in the world; the old
creeds groan and fall,
The ice of doubt at their heart, the snows
of fear over all.

THE TIDINGS TO OLAF 135

But now, even now, O friends, deep
down in the kindly earth,
Are not the marvellous seeds, awaiting
the hour of birth?

“Even now in the sunlit places, do not
the saplings prepare

To unfold their new growth to the light,
unsheathe their rich buds on the air?

“And so, from the dark, sweet mould of
the human heart will arise,
To enmorning the world with light and
this life emparadise,

“The deathless, young glory of love, And
valley and hill and plain
And fields and cities of men, they shall
not sorrow again.

136 THE TIDINGS TO OLAF

“For there shall be freedom and peace
and beauty in that far spring,
And folk shall go forth without fear, and
be glad at their work and sing.

“And men will hallow this day with His
name who died on the tree,
For the cause of eternal love, in the service
of liberty.”

“O King, shall the feet of Truth come
in through thy open door,
Or alone out of all the world be debarred?
Is it Christ or Thor?”

The King sat on his throne, and the two
priests stood by.
And Olaf's eyes grew mild as a blue April
sky.

THE TIDINGS TO OLAF 137

*Thus were the tidings to Olaf brought in
the early days,*

*To be a lamp in his house, and a sign-
post in the ways.*

*And you, O men and women, does it con-
cern you at all,*

*That Truth still cries at the cross-roads,
and you do not heed his call?*

THE PRAYER IN THE ROSE
GARDEN

LORD of this rose garden,
At the end of May,
Where thy guests are bidden
To tarry for a day,
Through the sweet white falling
Of the tender rain,
With thy roses theeward
Lift this dust again.

Make the heart within me
That crumbles to obey,
Perceive and know thy secret
Desire from day to day ;

Even as thy roses,
Knowing where they stand
Before the wind, thy presence,
Tremble at thy hand.

Make me, Lord, for beauty,
Only this I pray,
Like my brother roses,
Growing day by day,

Body, mind and spirit,
As thy voice may urge
From the wondrous twilight
At the garden's verge,

Till I be as they be,
Fair, then blown away,
With a name like attar,
Remembered for a day.

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